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DISHWASHER WITH AN ENERGY-SAVING HEATING MODE AND
METHOD THEREFOR

The invention relates to a dishwasher with an energy-saving heating mode and a method for operating such a dishwasher.

In conventional dishwashers, a washing liquid, usually called a washing solution, is heated during individual sub-program steps, e.g., "cleaning" and "rinsing" and the washing solution wets the dishes located in the dishwasher by means of a spraying system provided, for example, spray arms. As a result of the continuous circulation and action of the washing solution on the dishes and uniform heating of the washing solution, not only the washing solution is heated but also the dishes to be cleaned and the washing container and the materials arranged directly adjacent thereto, for example, insulating material.

In order to finally heat a washing solution to a specific temperature provided by the washing program, a total amount of energy which takes into account the heating of the dishes and the washing container in addition to the washing solution must be expended.

For example, at the beginning of the cleaning phase, a first partial quantity of the washing solution is heated to a temperature, for example 65°C and guided onto the dishes by means of the spraying system. As a result of the lower temperature of the dishes of about 20 to 24°C, the first partial quantity of the washing solution delivers a certain quantity of heat to the dishes so that the temperature of the dishes increases

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but the temperature of the washing solution decreases. The partial quantity of the washing solution thus cooled flows back via the circulating pump and is further heated until a specific temperature is reached. As a result of this continuous process, both the dishes and also areas of the washing container are heated to this predetermined temperature before the desired washing solution temperature is reached.

However, since only the temperature of the washing solution is important for achieving the desired cleaning performance, the energy balance of the dishwasher is disadvantageously influenced by the heating of the dishes and the washing container.

It is thus the object of the invention to provide a dishwasher and a method to reduce the energy required to heat the washing liquid in the best possible manner.

This object is solved by the method according to the invention having the features according to claim 1 and by the dishwasher having the features according to claim 6. Advantageous further developments of the present invention are characterised by the dependent claims.

In the method for reducing the energy consumption during a sub-program step, e.g. "pre-wash", "cleaning", "intermediate rinse" and "rinsing" in a washing program, e.g. "Universal 55", "Intensiv 70" or synonymous designations in a dishwasher, in a first step the washing liquid is heated to a predetermined temperature and during this heating phase the washing liquid is substantially not guided onto the dishes in

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the dishwasher and the washing liquid heated to the predetermined temperature is only guided onto the dishes, which have essentially not been heated, in a second step.

Advantageously, the heating phase is ended at the latest when the dishes have reached the predetermined temperature for the washing liquid. More appropriately, the temperature of the dishes can be determined by means of a temperature sensor which is placed in the washing container preferably on a wall of the washing container or at an otherwise suitable place.

Advantageously the washing liquid is circulated by means a circulating pump so that the heat distribution inside the washing liquid is substantially homogeneous. For example, a valve circuit controllable by the program control system opens a preferably substantially closed circuit, embodied as a flow section and separate from the spraying system, for circulating the washing liquid so that during this heating phase the washing liquid cannot reach the dishes via the spraying system. During the heating phase the washing liquid only circulates in this closed pipe system and is only introduced into the spraying system after reaching a predetermined temperature.

In another advantageous embodiment of the present invention no valve control is provided since wetting of the dishes by the washing liquid is prevented by the circulating pump circulating the washing liquid at a low pressure during the heating phase so that only a small quantity of liquid can escape from the spraying device associated with the lower basket. After reaching

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the desired temperature of the washing liquid, the circulating power is increased by the program control so that the spraying systems can act on the dishes with suitably heated washing liquid in accordance with the performance specification.

In a further preferred embodiment of the present invention, a separate container is provided in the dishwasher, which is provided with a heating device and heats the washing liquid without being circulated before this is circulated by the circulating pump and finally wets the dishes.

The method according to the invention and the dishwasher according to the invention achieve the advantage of substantially saving the energy used to heat the dishes since only the washing liquid is heated by suitable measures (its own flow section, lower circulating pump power or separate heating container) before this reaches the dishes.

In the application of the method according to the invention it is further taken into account that the temperature difference between the heated washing liquid and the dishes is not so great that the dishes are damaged as a result of the jump in temperature. For this purpose means for manually switching on and off the method according to the invention are provided on the dishwasher according to the invention. This is because if the method according to the invention is used, for example, for dishes made of crystal or ceramic, the rapid increase in temperature can cause cracks in the crystal and thus total loss of the crystal crockery or when ceramic is used, it can result

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in hairline cracks in the glazing. The dishwasher according to the invention advantageously has a button on the control panel whereby the method according to the invention can be switched on and off.